

LOCAL EMPLOYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM [LEAP]

Retention and Expansion Assistance for Chula Vista Businesses

The Chula Vista Local Employer Assistance Program [LEAP] is a business retention and expansion effort started by the City in 1999. LEAP's two goals are: 1) to respond to the needs of individual Chula Vista businesses, while 2) to create new programs and services that will support the local business community as a whole. As part of the program, Chula Vista City staff builds strong linkages with local and regional job training providers, financial institutions, utility companies, international trade experts and other business assistance resources, forming a network of providers offering assistance services to businesses in the Chula Vista community.

To date, Chula Vista's LEAP program has assisted 100 companies, resulting in more than 600 jobs being retained in the community and over 750 jobs being created.

ANNUAL LEAP FAIR

Information on business services ranging from financing to employee training is available to the Chula Vista business community as part of the annual LEAP Fair, held each summer. More than 20 local and regional business assistance providers participate in this tradeshow-style event – answering questions about their programs and resources. The fair features information booths, food vendors and local entertainment. Admission is free and open to all businesses in the City. Past exhibitors have included the South County Career Center, Small Business Development and International Trade Center, Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce, CDC Small Business Finance, SCORE and others. In addition, City departments have representatives available at the event to discuss services such as permit processing, business licensing and mass transit as well as business assistance programs ranging from redevelopment incentives to site selection assistance.

BUSINESS OMBUDSPERSON

Through the LEAP Program, the City established a Business Retention Specialist position to act as an ombudsperson or liaison between local businesses and the City. The position assists in directing a company's concerns and requests to the attention of appropriate City staff, facilitating solutions to issues as such regulations, fees and the permitting process.

FORUMS / WORKSHOPS

Chula Vista's LEAP Program coordinates a variety of business-related forums and workshops for local employers, as well, in a variety of subjects. Past topics have included:

- Future workforce needs
- Regional issues
- Best practices
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Customer service

In addition, LEAP has arranged to have nationally-known small business experts meet one-on-one with Chula Vista companies, providing informational tools, resources and practical advice.

ON-SITE VISITATION TEAM

As part of the LEAP program, a team of business assistance providers, led by the City's Business Retention Specialist, conducts on-site visits with select local employers. Through the on-site visit, a company's immediate needs and concerns can be addressed, and information is gathered to help develop citywide business assistance and recruitment strategies. The On-Site Visitation team includes representatives from the South County Career Center, the Small Business Development and International Trade Center and a local businessperson chosen on a rotating basis. Additionally a larger group of service providers meet quarterly to discuss needs and concerns raised by the visited businesses to develop collaborative solutions; participants including CDC Small Business Finance, Southwestern College, San Diego County Office of Trade and Business Development and the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, contact

Business Retention Specialist
Community Development Department
[619] 409-5888



REFERENCE BOOK
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